

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – DECEMBER 2014

AREAS COVERED: MARTHLY / EYREFIELD / MALAMALA / FLOCKFIELD / CHARLESTON

WEATHER SUMMARY – DECEMBER

Maximum temperature (°C)	39
Minimum temperature (°C)	16
Mean maximum (°C)	30.9
Mean minimum (°C)	22
Rainfall (mm)	148.5
Days of rain	10

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF DECEMBER 2014

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALE	11 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	6 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 FEMALE SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 MALE SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB	1 YEAR 1 MONTH
2 MALE CUBS	1 YEAR 1 MONTH

MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(12 sightings)

The Styx pride, who had previously only been seen on the Eastern side of the Sand river, prior to November 2014, made a few appearances on the western bank during the last month of 2014. During December, this pride, or representatives thereof, were viewed a total of 12 times, of which five were on the western bank of the Sand river.

The first sighting of this pride was of the three cubs alone, around the northern parts of bushbuck drive. The following day, a majority of the pride was seen together in the Sand river, adjacent West street bridge – however, the two sub-adult females were not present. These two individuals were not seen with the pride at all during the month of December, and reports from our neighbours indicate they have been seen mating with dominant males north of our boundary. These two sub-adult females were viewed a total of four times in December, two of these sightings included watching these lionesses feeding on impala kills they had made, in the north western parts of the property.

In addition to the absence of the sub-adult females from the pride, there were three sightings of the Styx pride where the two sub-adult males were also not present. They were seen apart from the pride, for two consecutive days towards the end of December, with the larger of the two mating with a sub-adult lioness from the Eyrefield pride. On the third day these lions were seen separately from the pride, was on the causeway – after a short while it was noticed the remainder of the pride was in the vicinity but were rapidly mobile away from one of the sub-adult males.

The reason the pride was running away is unknown as the following days after this incident, the seven members of the Styx pride was seen together yet again, along Skukuza road between the southern end of the airstrip, and Rattrays on Mala Mala.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 7

2 ADULT FEMALES

7 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 ADULT FEMALE

7 YEARS 5 MONTHS

1 SUB-ADULT MALE

2 YEARS 10 MONTHS

1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE

2 YEARS 10 MONTHS

1 SUB-ADULT MALE

2 YEARS 7 MONTHS

1 SUB-ADULT MALE

2 YEARS 3 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD

(5 sightings)

Of the five sightings of this pride during December, unlike November, all of the individuals were seen on the Western bank. The first three sightings of which, found all of the members of this pride (7) together north of Rattrays camp, eighteen days into the month. They were seen again the following day they were seen again, further north from this position as the junction of Northern and Southern Break West Street. The Eyrefield pride moved during the cooler hours of night, and was not seen until four days later when they were found on Campbell road, south of Flockfield drift.

During December, there were two more sightings of a single representative of this pride, on the 25th and 26th. The sub-adult female was seen in the company of the two sub-adult males from the Styx pride between Flockfield tower and Northern break and Southern Break West Street. During these two days, she was seen mating with the larger of the two sub-adult males, at times the intervals between mating was 15 minutes.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 4

1 ADULT FEMALE

UNKNOWN AGE

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

4 YEARS 6 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULT MALES

4 YEARS 6 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD

(4 sightings of the two sub-adult males; 1 sighting of the two females)

The two males from the Fourways pride were seen four times during December, twice in the first week of the month roughly midway along 2nd turning Jakkalsdraai. During these two sightings, they were seen feeding on a female buffalo carcass in the company of the lioness from the Charleston pride. It was not until the last week of the month when these two lions were seen again, during these sightings they were seen alone, in fairly close proximity to Charleston north crossing.

It was great to see the two lionesses from the Fourways pride, as they have not been seen since October. They were located once during the month, at the junction of Borehole road and Rock Drift road on the 14th of December.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 7

2 ADULT FEMALES	12 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 8 MONTHS
3 MALE CUBS	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

MARHTLY
(2 sightings)

This pride, as in November, was seen twice during December. On both of these occasions, which fell on the 10th and 21st of the month, this pride was seen in the Manyaleti river. The initial sighting was of the three lionesses, at small paraffin drift. The second and last sighting of this pride for December was of all of the members, relaxing on the southern bank of the Manyaleti river at paraffin drift.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

± 10 YEARS 4 MONTHS

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS, MARHTLY AND
BREAKAWAY MARHTLY PRIDES
(1 sighting)

The four brothers of the Manyalthi pride made us wait the entire month until they graced us with their presence on the last day of the year. They were seen in Marhtly, with the twelve members of the Marhtly break away pride.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 3

1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULT MALES	3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

CHARLESTON
(2 sightings of the female; 3 sightings of the two males)

The female from the Charleston pride, was seen twice during December – on the first and second day of the month. During these two sightings, this female was seen with the two sub-adult males from the Fourways pride on 2nd turning Jakkalsdraai.

The two males were also seen during December, it was great to see these two lions after more than a month, with both individuals looking in very good condition. On the fifth and sixth of December, they were seen on Jock walk, the following day one was relocated further north and followed to river rocks road. Neither of these two lions were seen again for almost two weeks, when they were once again spotted at the junction of river road and centre track Tamboti thicket.

TJELLAHANGA PRIDE=9

2 ADULT FEMALES	UNKNOWN AGES
1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE	± 2 YEARS 11 MONTHS
6 SUB-ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 11 MONTHS

EASTERN CHARLESTON, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings of this pride during November.

Other lions encountered

- **Male lions from the north** (8 sightings):
 - These two male lions are definitely making their presence well known on Mala Mala, with eight incredible sightings of these individuals taking place during December. On numerous occasions we were witness to them roaring at various places on the property. They were seen virtually east of Mala Mala main camp, right up to the north eastern half of the property. During the last sighting of these lions during 2014 (30th), they were seen running in on a herd of buffalo and eventually capturing a calf.
 - These lions are estimated to be about 10 years of age, and have been named “the Clarendon males” as of 23/12/2014.
- **Marthly breakaway pride** (1 sighting):
 - 12 lions (4 females, 8 cubs) were seen on the very last day of the year at a sighting with the four Manyalhi males.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

December	52
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

13 YEARS 0 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON
(3 sightings)

Thrice now, this fine specimen was seen three times during a month. The bicycle crossing male's first appearance during December, was on the 14th when he was spotted close to the borehole. He was not seen again for almost two weeks, until he was located on the 26th drinking from Styx crossing. The bicycle crossing male, was seen again the following day walking north on 1st turning Styx where we watched him ascend a large marula tree to escape the rain.

AIRSTRIP MALE

8 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(12 sightings)

The Airstrip male was seen a total of 12 times, during December – making him the most viewed individual leopard during December. He was seen on the first of the month, as well as the thirty first and many days in between moving around his territory, scent marking and roaring. On the eighth of the month, he was found with a juvenile wildebeest kill, which he had hoisted into a russet bushwillow tree, east of Picadilly pans. Wildebeest was obviously the flavour of the month for this dominant male leopard as he was seen chasing, catching and killing another juvenile on the 12th. This time, he was not as lucky as the first and before he could stash his quarry, the carcass was stolen from him and devoured in a matter of minutes by six hyena.

CHARLESTON MALE

8 YEARS 7 MONTHS

EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

WEST STREET MALE

5 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(2 sightings)

The west street male leopard was seen twice during December, both of which were in the first half of the month. This leopard is very fond of the Charleston area, as he was seen both instances in the south of the property. Once on the Charleston-Toulon boundary and the second on river road, at the junction with Charleston drive.

NEWINGTON MALE

6 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA
(10 sightings)

The Newington male leopard was seen the most in the last month of the last quarter, with ten sightings being recorded in total. Out of all of these sightings, only one was on the eastern bank of the Sand river, when this leopard was seen around Picadilly triangle. The remaining nine sightings of the Newington male were on the eastern bank between MalaMala main camp and the airstrip.

It appears he is still nursing his wounds which he received during November, but the recovery is looking good and the Newington male leopard will more than likely be back to full health in due course.

HOGVAAL MALE**7 YEARS 1 MONTH**EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
(0sighting)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

TSLEBE ROCKS MALE**± 8 YEARS 5 MONTHS**NORTHERN EYREFIELD
(0sighting)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE**14 YEARS 0 MONTHS**WESTERN MALAMALA
(6 sightings)

One of the six sightings of this male leopard was on the eastern side of the Sand river when he was seen around the track west of bicycle crossing. The remaining five sightings were all on the west of the river in very close proximity to the airstrip. On one such occasion, the Princess Alice Pans male encountered the Treehouse male leopard and the two had some brief interaction which resulted in both of them moving off into some thick bush. They were later relocated, and the Treehouse male was found to be walking in the path of the Princess Alice Pans male, scent marking and roaring. The Princess Alice Pans male took no notice of this younger leopard, and carried on patrolling and marking his territory.

GOWRIE MALE**± 7 YEARS 4 MONTHS**NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

RIVER ROCKS MALE**5 YEARS 4 MONTHS**

(2 sightings)

We had two sightings of this young leopard during December, one of which was in the first half of the month, the second in the latter half. Our first encounter was in the south of the property near River rocks road, the second was much further north and on the opposite bank of the river around Flockfield camp. Clearly this male is still too young to have established a territory of his own and is still moving around that of his father's – the Bicycle crossing male's territory.

KIKILEZI FEMALE**13 YEARS 3 MONTHS****2 FEMALE CUBS****1 YEAR 1 MONTH**WESTERN MALA-MALA, WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLI
(2 sightings of female, 3 sightings of female and cubs, 9 sightings of cubs without female)

Once again, these three leopards provided us with the most number of accumulated sightings during the month of December, as in November, with 14 in total. A majority of the sightings were of the cubs, on their own – obviously the Kikilezi female is getting more and more comfortable with leaving the cubs alone for longer periods of time as she goes off hunting and patrolling her territory. These two cubs are most entertaining to watch as they are getting very adventurous and have been seen numerous times stalking, and attempting to hunt various animals, ranging from; birds, monitor lizards, mongooses and klipspringer.

Midway through December, we were lucky enough to watch the Kikilezi female and her two cubs feeding off an impala kill, which she had made south of Campbell koppies, around the sausage spot. These three leopards spent a few days in this area, after which they moved north and west towards the Mlowathi river and Mlowathi koppies where they basically spent the remainder of the month.

TAMBOTI FEMALE **7 YEARS 3 MONTHS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA
(2 sightings)

The Tamboti female was seen twice during December, the first time was opposite MalaMala main camp at Rhino pens, twelve days into the month. The second occurrence was over two weeks later when she was seen far downstream, on the western bank of the Sand river, north of Flockfield camp.

MLOWATHI FEMALE **7 YEARS 10 MONTHS**
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(1 sightings)

This Mlowathi female was encountered once during December, along our northern boundary. She was seen at the junction with Eastern Side Mlowathi and the boundary, briefly, before crossing over northwards.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE **15 YEARS 1 MONTH**
CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE **10 YEARS 0 MONTHS**
TWO CUBS **6 MONTHS**
EYREFIELD
(3 sightings of female, 1 sightings of female and cub(s), 1 sighting of cub(s) without female)

Since the third of November, there has not been any sign of the second cub of the Ostrich Koppies female. We are remaining hopeful that it is still around, while the second cub who was seen twice during the month is looking very healthy. During one sighting of the Ostrich koppies female and this cub, there was a fresh female warthog kill which was a very entertaining sighting as the cub was practicing its stalking, pouncing and killing of the already deceased warthog.

Over and about the two sightings of the cub, once with and once without the Ostrich koppies female, she was seen three times on her own moving around her territory.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE **14 YEARS 4 MONTHS**
EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

DUDLEY FEMALE
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(2 sightings)

16 YEARS 2 MONTHS

Two sightings of this legendary leopard were recorded during the last month of 2014, one in the first ten days with the second taking place in the last ten days. During the second encounter with this female she was found with a fresh female impala kill. Even over the age of 16, this female leopard is successful in fending and hunting for herself.

DAUGHTER OF THE DUDLEY FEMALE
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

1 YEAR 9 MONTHS

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

EMSAGWENI FEMALE
MALA-MALA
(2 sightings)

5 YEARS 0 MONTHS

The Emsagweni female is somewhat of an elusive leopard, but always an enjoyable female to see. She was first located when the unmistakable sound of monkeys alarm calling was followed up on. A while afterwards, this leopard was located with not one but two vervet monkey carcasses, which she proceeded to consume. Obviously this quarry was not enough to satiate her hunger, as shortly after she was done she began stalking a female bushbuck, which turned out to be an unsuccessful hunt in the bush line south of Terminalia road, west of Western Side Matshapiri.

The second sighting of the Emsagweni female was towards the end of the month when she was seen in a large Jackalberry tree, south and east of Matshapiri open area crossing.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

10 YEARS 8 MONTHS

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

Other leopards encountered:

- **Treehouse male leopard:** this leopard was encountered seven times in December, all of which were on the western bank. For three days was seen feeding on and defending an impala kill which he had stored around West Street pans. On the 30th, there was some interaction between this male and the Princess Alice Pans male, who currently holds the area in his territory.
- **The Marthly male leopard:** Similarly to the Treehouse male, this leopard was also only seen on the Western bank, with a total of six sightings. The first of which was north of the parking bay, with a juvenile warthog kill.
- **The Daughter of the Tamboti female:** This young leopardess is becoming a regular visitor and a very welcome one at that, with nine sightings in December. This young and playful individual spends most of her time between the Sand river and the Airstrip, providing much entertainment, such as investigating a black mamba at the junction of Kikilezihash and Northern track old airstrip.

- **No ID males:** (2 sightings)
- **No ID females:** (6 sightings)
- **No ID cubs:** (2 sightings)
- **No ID:** (1 sighting)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

November	31
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CHEETAH

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

Two male cheetah were seen on numerous occasions during December, of these four wonderful sightings – one included watching them kill a juvenile impala around Fourways open area crossing. Some of the other sightings we had of these males, included them: playing with one another, scent marking and roaming around Clarendon open area.

December	2
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Three sightings of these playful animals in December provided much entertainment as always, with the animals running around and interacting with one another. We were lucky enough to see two different packs, one of 12 and another of 16.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

December	28
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

December was a record breaking month in terms of elephant sightings for 2014, with 148 different encounters being recorded for the month. These ranged from viewing individual bulls, to larger herds. One of the largest herds seen in December, was that of 75 elephants.

Buffalo sightings were a close second to being a record during December, as well, with 77 being recorded. Similarly to the elephants sightings, this ranged from encountering single buffalo bulls to a few cases where the herds were over 300 hundred individuals strong.

OTHER INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

December was a good month as we noticed the European Roller returning from its migrations. In addition to this return visitor, there are a number of new additions to the bushveld with large numbers of juveniles being born. Some were even lucky enough to witness a Wildebeest giving birth in Mlowathi open area during December.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR DECEMBER 2014

Lion:	39
Leopard:	95
Elephant:	148
Buffalo:	77
Cheetah:	4
Cape Hunting Dog:	3